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ABSTRACT

Schools that are most successful in engaging parents and other family members in support of their children's learning look beyond traditional definitions of parent involvement to a broader conception of supporting families in activities outside of school that can encourage their children's learning. This idea book is intended to assist educators, parents, and policymakers as they develop school-family partnerships, identifying and describing successful strategies used by 20 local Title I programs. Following an executive summary, the book notes resources for involving families in education, includes research supporting such partnerships, and describes how Title I encourages partnerships. Next, the book describes successful local approaches to family involvement in education, organized around strategies for overcoming common barriers to family involvement, including: (1) overcoming time and resource constraints; (2) providing information and training to parents and school staff; (3) restructuring schools to support family involvement; (4) bridging school-family differences; and (5) tapping external supports for partnerships. Finally, the book presents conclusions about establishing and sustaining partnerships, noting that at the same time that successful partnerships share accountability, specific stakeholders must assume individual responsibility, and that those schools that succeed in involving large numbers of parents invest energy in finding solutions for problems, not excuses. The book's two appendices present descriptions of 20 successful local approaches to family involvement and sign-on information for the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. (Contains 13 references.) (KB)

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Family Involvement in Children's Education

Successful Local Approaches

An Idea Book

Abridged Version

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Family Involvement in Children's Education

Successful Local Approaches

An Idea Book

Abridged Version

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

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This Idea Book is offered to stimulate thinking and discussion about how schools can overcome barriers to family involvement in their children's education, regardless of family circumstances or student performance. While this book draws on the successful local approaches studied, we would also like to hear about effective programs or practices that have worked in your community. Please send your comments to the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202–8173, fax them to 202–205–9133, or send an e-mail to *partner@ed.gov*. A description of the Partnership and its activities can be found at the back of this publication.

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Preface

We well know that when educators, families, and communities work together, schools get better. As a result, students get the high quality education they need to lead productive lives. Yet various barriers in the school, home, and community often prevent strong partnerships from developing.

This Idea Book describes how some schools and their communities have overcome key barriers—finding the time, increasing their information about each other, bridging school-family differences, improving schools, and tapping external supports—to strengthen school-family partnerships.

The report concludes that successful partnerships require the sustained mutual collaboration and support of school staffs and families at home and at school. Businesses or community groups can also help schools and families to work together.

This Idea Book is one of an occasional series issued by the U.S. Department of Education to provide promising ideas to educators and community leaders on the critical issues we face together. It is designed for school administrators, teachers, policymakers, and parents to help families become more active participants in their children's education.

This Idea Book is based on case studies of 20 successful education programs around the country. They include elementary and secondary schools and districtwide programs that receive Title I funds from the U.S. Department of Education. What these schools have done with low-income students and their families can be done by all schools.

Also, an ongoing source of assistance and networking opportunities can be found in the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. If you are interested in joining the Partnership, call 1–800–USA–LEARN.

In addition, schools that are working to build family-school-community partnerships focused on critical education issues may find "A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for School-Family-Community Partnerships" to be helpful. It is available by calling the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) at 1–800–443–3742.

The ideas in this book and the successes of the profiled schools are intended to help improve your schools, strengthen school relationships with families, and help all children learn more.

Executive Summary

Thirty years of research confirms that family involvement is a powerful influence on children's achievement in school (Eagle, 1989; Henderson & Berla, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Ziegler, 1987). When families are involved in their children's education, children earn higher grades and receive higher scores on tests, attend school more regularly, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviors, graduate from high school at higher rates, and are more likely to enroll in higher education than students with less involved families. For these reasons, increasing family involvement in the education of their children is an important goal for schools, particularly those serving low-income and other students at risk of failure. Increasing family involvement in children's education is also an important goal of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA),[1] which is designed to enable schools to provide opportunities for low-income and low-achieving children to acquire knowledge and skills contained in challenging standards developed for all children. Title I is the largest federal program supporting elementary and secondary education.

Families and Schools as Partners

If families are to work with schools as partners in the education of their children, schools must provide them with the opportunities and support they need to become involved. Too often schools expect families to do it all alone. Developing effective partnerships with families requires that all school staff (administrators, teachers, and support staff) create a school environment that welcomes parents and encourages them to raise questions and voice their concerns as well as to participate appropriately in decisionmaking. Developing partnerships also requires that school staff provide parents with the information and training they need to become involved and that they reach out to parents with invitations to participate in their children's learning.

Schools that are most successful in engaging parents and other family members in support of their children's learning look beyond traditional definitions of parent involvement—participating in a parent teacher organization or signing quarterly report cards—to a broader conception of parents as full partners in the education of their children. Rather than striving only to increase parent participation in school-based activities, successful schools seek to support families in their activities outside of school that can encourage their children's learning. Schools that have developed successful partnerships with parents view student achievement as a shared responsibility, and all stakeholders—including parents, administrators, teachers, and community leaders—play important roles in supporting children's learning.

Successful school-family partnerships require the sustained mutual collaboration, support, and participation of school staffs and families at home and at school in activities that can directly affect the success of children's learning.

Successful school-family partnerships require the sustained mutual collaboration, support, and participation of school staffs and families at home and at school in activities that can directly affect the success of children's learning. If families are to work with schools as full partners in the education of their children, schools must provide them with the opportunities and support they need for success.

Successful Approaches to Family Involvement in Education

This Idea Book is intended to assist educators, parents, and policymakers as they develop and nurture school-family partnerships.[2]

This Idea Book is intended to assist educators, parents, and policymakers as they develop and nurture school-family partnerships.[2] The Idea Book identifies and describes successful strategies used by 20 local Title I programs that have overcome barriers to parent involvement (see the appendix for a brief overview of each program). These district and school programs enhance parent-school communications and help parents support their children's academic work at school and at home. Some of the programs involve parents in school planning and governance activities and as volunteers. Some also provide coordinated essential non-educational services for families to support their children's academic development. Telephone interviews with staff and parents at these programs as well as focus group interviews with parents provided the detailed illustrations of specific strategies for overcoming barriers to parent involvement included here.

This Idea Book suggests ways that schools, families, and communities can work together to build strong partnerships. It is organized around strategies for overcoming common barriers to family involvement in schools. These strategies include:

- ***Overcoming time and resource constraints.*** In order to build strong partnerships, families and school staff need time to get to know one another, plan how they will work together to increase student learning, and carry out their plans. Successful programs find the time and resources for both teachers and parents to develop school-family partnerships.

- ***Providing information and training to parents and school staff.*** Without the information and skills to communicate with each other, misperceptions and distrust can flourish between parents and school personnel. Initiatives to bridge the information gap between parents and school are at the center of each of the 20 programs reviewed for this Idea Book. Through workshops and a variety of outreach activities such as informative newsletters, handbooks, and home visits, parents and school staff across these programs are learning how to trust each other and work together to help children succeed in school.

- ***Restructuring schools to support family involvement.*** Developing a successful school-family partnership must be a whole school endeavor, not the work of a single person or program. Traditional school organization and practices, especially in secondary schools, often discourage family members from becoming involved. To create a welcoming environment for parents, one that enlists their support in helping their children succeed, schools can make changes that make them more personal and inviting places. Whatever steps schools take in developing partnerships with families, schools that are most successful are prepared to reconsider all of their established ways of doing business and to restructure in ways that will make them less hierarchal, more personal, and more accessible to parents.

- ***Bridging school-family differences.*** Language and cultural differences as well as differences in educational attainment separating families and school staff can make communication and family participation in school activities difficult. Strategies to address these differences include reaching out to parents with little formal education, addressing language differences through bilingual services for communicating both orally and in writing with families about school programs and children's progress, and promoting cultural understanding to build trust between home and school.

- ***Tapping external supports for partnerships.*** Many Title I schools have nourished and strengthened partnerships by tapping the supports available in their local communities and beyond. Collaborative efforts to provide schools and families with the tools they need to support learning can include partnerships with local businesses, health care and other community service agencies, and colleges and universities, as well as supports provided by school districts and states.

Effects on Students and Families

The experience of the school and district programs reviewed for this report supports the conclusion that family involvement can have significant effects on student achievement. The appendix presents evidence of improvement in student outcomes, wherever it was available, for each of the school or district programs highlighted in this Idea Book. Although it is impossible to attribute student achievement gains or other student outcomes in any of these schools or districts solely to their parent involvement activities, it does appear that many schools that make parent involvement a priority also see student outcomes improve. These positive outcomes may be due to increased parent involvement itself, or, what is more likely, to a whole constellation of factors, including a strong instructional program and a commitment to high standards for all students. Nevertheless, it appears that strong parent involvement is an important feature of many schools that succeed in raising student achievement.

Guidelines for Effective Partnerships

Effective strategies for partnerships differ from community to community, and the most appropriate strategies for a particular community will depend on local interests, needs, and resources.

Effective strategies for partnerships differ from community to community, and the most appropriate strategies for a particular community will depend on local interests, needs, and resources. Even so, successful approaches to promoting family involvement in the education of their children share an emphasis on innovation and flexibility. Furthermore, most of the schools included in this Idea Book have enhanced their ability to be innovative and flexible by implementing schoolwide programs.[3] The experiences of the programs included here suggest the following guidelines for successful partnerships:

- ***There is no "one size fits all" approach to partnerships.*** Build on what works well. Begin the school-family partnership by identifying, with families, the strengths, interests, and needs of families, students, and school staff, and design strategies that respond to identified strengths, interests, and needs.

- ***Training and staff development is an essential investment.*** Strengthen the school-family partnership with professional development and training for all school staff as well as parents and other family members. Both school staff and families need the knowledge and skills that enable them to work with one another and with the larger community to support children's learning.

- ***Communication is the foundation of effective partnerships.*** Plan strategies that accommodate the varied language and cultural needs as well as lifestyles and work schedules of school staff and families. Even the best planned school-family partnerships will fail if the participants cannot communicate effectively.

- ***Flexibility and diversity are key.*** Recognize that effective parent involvement takes many forms that may not necessarily require parents' presence at a workshop, meeting, or school. The emphasis should be on parents helping children learn, and this can happen in schools, homes, or elsewhere in a community.

- ***Projects need to take advantage of the training, assistance, and funding offered by sources external to schools.*** These can include school districts, community organizations and public agencies, local colleges and universities, state education agencies, and ED-sponsored Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers.[4] While Title I program funds support the parent involvement activities of many programs featured here, several have increased the resources available for parent involvement activities by looking beyond school walls.

- ***Change takes time.*** Recognize that developing a successful school-family partnership requires continued effort over time, and that solving one problem often creates new challenges. Further, a successful partnership requires the involvement of many stakeholders, not just a few.

- ***Projects need to regularly assess the effects of the partnership using multiple indicators.*** These may include indicators of family, school staff, and community participation in and satisfaction with school-related activities. They may also include measures of the quality of school-family interactions and of student educational progress.

Editor's Note

This volume is a condensed version of the original, and therefore it does not contain all of the appendix material found in the complete Idea Book. Those appendices that are omitted include:

- profiles of 10 successful partnerships;

- contact information for the profiled programs; and

- resources sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.

To obtain the complete Idea Book, use the ordering information listed in the Preface on page iii.

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Resources for Involving Families in Education

Thirty years of research confirms that family involvement is a powerful influence on children's achievement in school (Eagle, 1989; Henderson & Berla, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Ziegler, 1987). When families are involved in their children's education, children earn higher grades and receive higher scores on tests, attend school more regularly, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviors, graduate from high school at higher rates, and are more likely to enroll in higher education than students with less involved families. For these reasons, increasing family involvement in the education of their children is an important goal for schools, particularly those serving low-income and other students at risk of failure.

Achieving effective school-family partnerships is not always easy, however. Barriers to family involvement in schools arise from many sources, some related to the constraints facing teachers and other school staff, some related to the challenges and pressures that families face, and others related to language, cultural, and socioeconomic differences between families and school staff. For many schools across the nation, these barriers are formidable obstacles to increasing parents' involvement in their children's education. Experience in other schools and communities, however, demonstrates that schools and families can work together to overcome these barriers in productive and mutually satisfying ways.

Building Successful Partnerships

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was created to bridge the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged children and other children. It is designed to enable schools to provide opportunities for disadvantaged children to acquire knowledge and skills contained in challenging standards developed for all children. Title I is the largest federal program supporting elementary and secondary education.

Increasing family involvement in children's education is an important goal for schools.

Increasing family involvement in children's education is an important goal for schools. This Idea Book is intended to help Title I and other schools build effective partnerships with families to support student learning. It suggests a range of strategies and activities for educators, parents, and policymakers to consider.[5]

The 20 schools and districts included in this Idea Book span all grade levels (K–12) as well as urban, suburban, and rural areas across the country. They were selected based on a review of research on promising parent involvement practices and the recommendations of several experts. The experts include researchers, education practitioners, and parent representatives. Findings from focus group interviews with parents of children attending five of the schools are also included in this Idea Book. These interviews elicited parents' perspectives on the most effective ways to engage families in their children's education, barriers to parent involvement in Title I schools, and the steps schools

can take to overcome barriers and reach out to parents. (The complete Idea Book also includes in-depth profiles of 10 local programs, selected to highlight a variety of approaches to building strong partnerships.)

Successful partnerships are those that involve the sustained mutual collaboration, support, and participation of school staffs and families at home and at school in activities and efforts that can directly and positively affect the success of children's learning and progress in school.

Successful partnerships are those that involve the sustained mutual collaboration, support, and participation of school staffs and families at home and at school in activities and efforts that can directly and positively affect the success of children's learning and progress in school. Schools that have developed successful partnerships with parents view student achievement as a shared responsibility, and all stakeholders—including parents, administrators, teachers, and community leaders—play important roles in supporting children's learning.

Research Supports Partnerships

A sizeable body of research addresses programs or reforms that stress parent involvement as a means to improve student academic achievement and restructure public schools (see, for example, Epstein, 1995; Fruchter, Galletta, & White, 1992; Rioux & Berla, 1993; Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Fruchter, Galletta, and White (1992) analyze 18 recently developed programs or reforms that stress parental involvement as a strategy to improve student academic performance, restructure schools, and reform public education, especially in schools serving low-income and disadvantaged students. Rioux and Berla (1993) highlight innovative parental involvement programs for diverse populations of students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through high school and suggest strategies for creating successful programs. In *Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning*, the U.S. Department of Education (1994) describes how schools, community-based organizations, businesses, states, and federal programs can help parents take more active roles in their children's learning. For families of children with disabilities, Turnbull and Turnbull (1990) provide a review of research and practice on partnerships between families and professionals, including school personnel. Of particular relevance to families' involvement in their children's education is the discussion of barriers to family participation in developing an individualized education plan (IEP).[6] Additionally, Epstein (1995) has summarized the theory, framework, and guidelines that can assist schools in building partnerships. To add to the body of evidence on strategies to build and strengthen school-family partnerships, we selected schools to include in this Idea Book that had not, for the most part, been featured in other national publications.

After scanning the research and receiving experts' recommendations about Title I schools and districts with successful parent involvement programs, we telephoned potential sites to collect information about parent involvement activities and strategies, demographic information, and evidence of success, including data on the level of parent involvement in particular activities as well as any improvements in student achievement. This information for the 20 programs appears in the appendix. Most of these sites demonstrate a wide variety of parent involvement strategies and present strong evidence of success in increasing the numbers of parents participating in activities. A few

also provide some evidence of improvements in student performance. However, in selecting the 20 programs, priority was given to those that had high and/or improved parent participation levels, since in most cases it is not possible to attribute improved student achievement directly to particular parent involvement strategies or activities. (Gains in student academic achievement depend on many factors that include parent involvement as well as curriculum, instruction, and effective teaching.)

Title I Encourages Partnerships

Title I, as reauthorized by the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, places a greater emphasis on parent involvement than did its predecessor, Chapter 1. Chapter 1 defined parent involvement as the building of "partnerships between home and school," but left the development of strategies for building these partnerships up to local schools and districts. Under IASA, Title I requires that local schools and districts adopt specific strategies for developing school-family partnerships. Title I parent involvement provisions emphasize:

- policy involvement by parents at the school and district level;
- shared school-family responsibility for high academic performance, as expressed in school-parent compacts; and
- the development of school and parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration.

These Title I requirements might serve as useful guidelines for all schools as they strengthen school-family partnerships.

Title I requires that parents receive information and training in a variety of areas related to their children's education, including the state's standards for what all children are expected to know and be able to do.

Title I requires that parents receive information and training in a variety of areas related to their children's education, including the state's standards for what all children are expected to know and be able to do. Parents must also be informed about the state's assessment procedures for measuring performance and progress. In addition, parents must be involved in Title I planning and decisionmaking, including the development of the school plan. The law requires that they receive assistance and support, including literacy assistance if necessary, to assume these roles and to work with their children at home.

Title I requires schools to develop a written parent involvement policy and to develop, with parents, school-parent compacts that describe the responsibilities of both the school and parents as they work together to help students achieve high standards. These compacts—and progress in meeting the responsibilities they describe—are to be discussed during parent-teacher conferences. Title I encourages compacts that recognize the full range of roles that parents can play in their children's education as well as the need for parents and schools to develop and maintain partnerships and ongoing dialogue around children's achievement.

Finally, Title I requires local education agencies (LEAs) to reserve funds from their Part A (basic programs operated by LEAs) allocations to fund parent involvement, including such activities as family literacy and parenting skills education. Nearly all of the schools featured in this Idea Book have implemented schoolwide programs,[7] and their Title I and other federal and local funds support a wide variety of parent involvement activities. In addition, as indicated in the appendix, both schools and districts often draw from other funding sources at the federal, state, and local levels to contribute to their education programs and activities including parent involvement.

Overcoming Common Barriers to Family Involvement

Recent data from two nationally representative surveys (a survey of principals on Family and School Partnerships in Public Schools, K–8, and the Parent/Family Involvement Component of the 1996 National Household Educational Survey) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) suggest that many of the barriers addressed in this Idea Book have significant, measurable effects on parent involvement in schools. Further, data from both surveys show that lower-income parents and parents with less education participate less often in school-based parent involvement activities than do higher-income parents with higher education levels. In addition, parents of older children participate less often than parents of younger children.

When school-, family-, or community-related barriers deter parents from becoming involved, the consequences for students can be serious.

This Idea Book is organized around strategies for overcoming a common set of barriers to family involvement in schools.

These strategies, drawn from the literature and advice of experts, include:

- overcoming time and resource constraints;
- providing information and training to parents and school staff;
- restructuring schools to support family involvement;
- bridging school-family differences; and
- tapping external supports for partnerships.

Key aspects of each strategy and related activities used by the 20 schools and districts studied are discussed in the following sections.

Successful Local Approaches to Family Involvement in Education

Many successful strategies for family involvement used by Title I schools and districts demonstrate the capacity of families, schools, and communities, working together, to improve children's learning. Because families, schools, and communities vary, however, a strategy that works in one setting may not work in another. Thus, there is no one best model that can be easily transplanted from place to place. Stakeholders must understand the conditions of their communities in order to select and tailor approaches that meet local needs. Stakeholders must also recognize that parent involvement takes many forms; it may not necessarily require, for example, parents' presence at a workshop, meeting, or school. The emphasis of parent involvement should be on families helping children succeed in school, and this can happen in schools, homes, and elsewhere in local communities. Creating an effective partnership in which parents feel welcome and valued requires that schools work to break down many of the common barriers to effective partnerships, including barriers related to time, school structure, and training. The following sections present strategies that schools and districts have employed to overcome each of these barriers to parent involvement and to help build productive relationships with parents.

Overcoming Time and Resource Constraints

In order to build strong partnerships, families and school staff members need time to get to know one another, learn from one another, and plan how they will work together to increase student learning.

In order to build strong partnerships, families and school staff members need time to get to know one another, learn from one another, and plan how they will work together to increase student learning. This need can be especially pressing in Title I schools. For example, principals of K–8 Title I schools report that time is a barrier to parent involvement more often than any other factor. Eighty-seven percent of Title I principals report that lack of time on the part of parents is a significant barrier to parent involvement, and 56 percent report that lack of time on the part of school staff is a barrier (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Almost all Title I schools and districts that have been successful in developing strong school-family partnerships have found ways to make time for parents and teachers to work together and to use other resources to support their partnerships.

Finding Time for Teachers

Strategies for helping teachers make time to develop school-family partnerships include (1) assigning parent coordinators or home-school liaisons to help teachers maintain contact with parents through home visits or by covering classes for teachers so they can meet with parents; (2) providing time during the school day for teachers to meet with parents or visit them at their homes; (3) providing stipends or compensatory time off for teachers to meet with parents after school hours; and (4) freeing up teachers from routine duties, such as lunchroom supervision, in order to meet with students' family members. Home-school liaisons can also handle many of the logistical tasks associated

with fostering school-family partnerships, such as contacting all families by telephone at the beginning of the school year and encouraging parent activities at home and at school. In this way, liaisons free teachers to concentrate on building relationships. In fact, focus group interviews suggest that having a parent fill the role of liaison can help parents form a strong network of support to stay involved in school activities and decisions.

In addition to helping teachers make the most efficient use of their limited time, some schools have also found ways to buy more time for teachers or to allow teachers to use their time more flexibly.

In addition to helping teachers make the most efficient use of their limited time, some schools have also found ways to buy more time for teachers or to allow teachers to use their time more flexibly. Some schools use Title I resources strategically to help buy time for teachers; other schools have adopted "flexible scheduling" as a feature of teacher contracts that allow teachers more time to interact with parents outside of the traditional school day. The schools reviewed for this study have used the following strategies for freeing up teachers to work with parents:

- Atenville Elementary, a schoolwide program in the Lincoln County Public Schools, Harts, West Virginia, gives teachers release time to conduct home visits with classes covered by the principal or another teacher. The school uses Title I funds to support a part-time parent coordinator to organize the "telephone tree" program, which helps maintain home-school communications. The coordinator also organizes parent volunteers to help make home visits. Parent volunteers staff lunch and recreational periods to give teachers a daily in-school planning period that can be used to meet with parents. From 1991–92 to 1995–96, the number of parent volunteer hours rose from 2,000 to 7,000.

- Ferguson Elementary, a schoolwide program in the school district of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), uses Title I funds to provide compensation for teachers who conduct parent workshops in the evening and on weekends. Title I funds also support the parent involvement coordinator and school-community coordinator. These coordinators operate the Parent Network that helps teachers communicate information to students and parents about upcoming events. The 1995–96 fall open house drew 350 parents, compared with 30 parents in the fall of 1989. In addition, about 50 parents volunteer as classroom aides each week.

- The Wendell Phillips Visual and Performing Arts Magnet School in the Kansas City Public Schools, Kansas City, Missouri, uses its schoolwide program to employ a full-time parent-community liaison. The liaison keeps teachers informed about family needs and helps teachers spread information on school-related issues to all parents. For example, the parent-community liaison led an orientation for parents on state and district school policies; more than 150 parents attended. The liaison helps organize all school-family events, allowing teachers and principals to spend more time meeting with parents to discuss student learning and less time making logistical and administrative arrangements to organize events.

Other Resources to Support Schools' Outreach to Families

In addition to using resources to free up time for teachers, schools can also deploy their resources strategically to help teachers and other staff overcome the logistical constraints that often hinder their work with families. Some schools are using technology to support school-home communication; in addition to providing easier access to telephones for teachers, some schools are using voice mail, "information hotlines," and other technology to make communication more efficient. For example:

- In Maine's School Administration District (SAD) #3, in Thorndike, Maine, several communication strategies address barriers posed by the long distances between schools and homes in this rural area. Several grants from the local telephone company, Bell Atlantic, and the state's Public Utilities Commission have supported the wiring of schools for computers and telephone hub sites to allow parents to communicate with schools via computer. Parents can use terminals at nearby schools or local town halls to communicate with the schools their children attend, which are often many miles away.

- Each Atenville Elementary schoolteacher has a telephone in his or her classroom to enable home-school communication throughout the school day.

- At Ferguson Elementary School, Title I funds pay for the telephone line used by the Parent Network and for other resources and materials for parent and staff workshops on parent involvement.

Helping Parents Overcome Time and Resource Constraints

Schools can be sensitive to time pressures facing parents by scheduling meetings at night (in neighborhoods where parents feel safe traveling to the school at night) or before work shifts to accommodate the schedules of working parents or on weekend mornings to address parents' safety concerns. Schools can also help parents by: (1) providing early notices of meetings and activities, allowing parents time to adjust their schedules; (2) establishing homework hotlines or voice mail systems so parents can stay apprised of their children's schoolwork without leaving their homes (Moles, 1996); (3) offering the same event more than once; and (4) providing information to parents who could not attend a meeting to keep them informed.

Schools can also address parents' resource constraints by: (1) providing parents with transportation and child care services so that they can attend school events; (2) holding school-initiated events near families' homes (e.g., at community or public housing centers); and (3) conducting home visits. In focus group interviews, parents noted that these supports send a strong message that the school is serious about getting them involved.

The following schools have developed strategies to help parents overcome the time and commuting barriers (e.g., distance from school, lack of transportation) that deter many parents from interacting directly with schools:

- At Buhrer Elementary, a schoolwide program in the Cleveland Public Schools, Cleveland, Ohio, teachers hold parent conferences off-campus in places that are closer to parents' and students' homes. The school also holds Block Parent Meetings for those families who cannot attend school events because they live on the outskirts of the community and lack transportation. Block meetings address parent concerns and offer an opportunity to share school-related information. These meetings take place every 2–3 months in a parent's home or a nearby library. A typical meeting attracts 18–20 parents, and the principal reports a continuing increase in the number of block parents attending school functions since the program started.

- Several schools also offer transportation and child care services and hold events in the evenings and on weekends to enable parents to attend parent workshops or other school-related events. For example, at Rodney B. Cox Elementary, a schoolwide program in the Pasco County Public Schools, Dade City, Florida, the parent involvement coordinator organizes carpools for parents to attend events. At Cox, up to 200 parents participate in workshops each month. The districtwide Parent Resource Center in Stockton, California, hired a school bus driver to take parents to the center and provides babysitters to care for young children. To accommodate parents' needs, Ferguson Elementary offers workshops and classes on the weekends and evening and also provides child care services; Saturday workshops have attracted 100–150 parents each. And in Maine's SAD #3, both teachers and parents are encouraged to bring their families to potluck nights, a strategy to increase school-family communication that has led to higher attendance rates at these events. Three potluck nights held during the 1995–96 school year attracted increasing numbers of participants—roughly 50, 70, and 100 families.

- School staff at Cane Run Elementary, a schoolwide program in the Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, Kentucky, report that many parents find it difficult to come into the school building to volunteer. So, Cane Run's Family Resource Center staff coordinates volunteer activities that parents can carry out from home, such as preparing mailings, making telephone calls, and writing newsletters.

Resolving Safety Concerns

To address the fact that many parents, especially those with children attending high-poverty schools, are concerned about traveling to and from their child's school at night, schools and communities can be responsible for assuring that school neighborhoods are safe. For example, communities can set up neighborhood watches to combat crime, and schools can hold events in churches or community centers located near parents' homes. Parent resource centers can also offer activities in locations near parents' homes. The Stockton (California) Unified School District Parent Resource Center, for example, often offers workshops at local school sites because many parents are hesitant to leave their own neighborhoods.

Parents themselves play an important role in ensuring that the school is perceived as a safe place for other parents to gather. As the parent involvement specialist at Stockton's Parent Resource Center noted, parents at the center have not only encouraged other parents to become involved but also had a dramatic impact on at least one school. Five years ago Webster Middle School in Stockton

experienced gang-related problems. After a fight occurred between two gang members in the school one afternoon, rumors began to circulate of a big confrontation that would take place the next day. Concerned about gang warfare erupting at the school, the school principal called for help. A mentor parent at the school called other parents and organized them for action. The next day 40 parents showed up at the school to help patrol the halls and school grounds. The principal asserts that this show of parental support, along with the parents' ongoing volunteer efforts, has led to the virtual elimination of gang-related activity at the school.

In addition, when asked if safety issues deter parents from coming to the school, parents at one urban high school responded that the best example they can set for other parents is not to stay away. "There is no safe place anymore; we make it safe with our presence," said one parent. "We keep an eye out on the children, and we have security patrols that drive around," noted a parent at another inner-city school. "But safety is another reason why parents should be involved."

Providing Information and Training to Parents and School Staff

Without the information and skills to communicate with each other, misperceptions and distrust can flourish between parents and school personnel. In fact, most parents and school staff in Title I schools receive little training on how to work with one another. For example, almost half of principals (48 percent) in K–8 Title I schools report that lack of staff training in working with parents is a great or moderate barrier to parent involvement (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Initiatives to bridge the information gap between parents and schools are at the center of each of the 20 schools reviewed for this Idea Book.

Through workshops and a variety of outreach activities such as informative newsletters, handbooks, and home visits, parents and school staff across these programs are learning how to trust each other and work together to help children succeed in school.

Through workshops and a variety of outreach activities such as informative newsletters, handbooks, and home visits, parents and school staff across these programs are learning how to trust each other and work together to help children succeed in school. Their approaches include helping parents support learning at home, preparing parents to participate in school decisionmaking, and providing teachers, principals, and school staff with strategies for reaching out to parents and working with them as partners. These approaches share an emphasis on training and information that is grounded in the needs and goals of families and school staff, and that focus on changing the negative attitudes that parents and school staff may hold toward each other.

Training to Inform and Involve Parents

All of the schools and districts interviewed for this study offer parents training and information through workshops held weekly, monthly, or several times throughout the year. Parent training activities across the 20 programs focus on one or more of four areas of parent involvement: parenting, learning at home, decisionmaking in schools, and volunteering.

Parenting workshops. Workshops on parenting help families learn about child development and how to support student academic learning. Parenting workshops cover a number of different issues, such as children's language development and learning styles, parent nurturing and discipline strategies, child abuse prevention, and nutrition and health practices. For example, Stockton's Parent Resource Center offers four to six parenting workshops each month on topics such as the relationship between student achievement and parent expectations, "protective parenting" skills to prevent children from engaging in unhealthy behaviors, and anger management. The center also trains "mentor parents" at intensive 3-day institutes. As mentors, they help other parents learn about strategies for helping children learn and outreach strategies that build partnerships between schools and families.

Schools can also help build parenting skills by assisting parents in reaching their own academic and vocational goals. In collaboration with local community colleges, many programs connect parents to adult education courses to receive a General Educational Development (GED) credential, college credit, or develop job-related skills.

- The district-sponsored Parent Center in the Buffalo (New York) Public Schools offers parent-child computer classes for students in grades 6 through 12. Classes bring parents and their children together to develop skills in desktop publishing and computer programming. For parents who cannot attend the center, the Take Home Computer Program orients parents on how to install and operate computers that they can keep for 5–6 weeks. On a survey about the 1994–95 Take Home Computer Program, 44 percent of parents reported that the program had a significant effect on their child's motivation toward learning; 52 percent reported that it had some effect. All parents reported noticeable or significant improvements in their children's math and reading skills. In addition, parents participating in the center's Even Start program have many choices to meet their educational needs, including: classes in adult basic education to earn their GED, computer literacy training that can lead to advanced courses and college credit, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, and classes in parenting skills.

- Ferguson Elementary School in Philadelphia offers an adult evening school in conjunction with a nearby university. During 1995–96, 25 parents received certificates of continuing education from the university. In 1996, classes were offered in computer literacy, self-esteem, ESL, and Spanish literacy. Courses are offered at the school site and taught by teachers, parents, and community members. To support parent involvement, the university provides stipends for babysitters who care for the children of participants.

Helping parents support learning at home. Every family functions as a learning environment, regardless of its income level, structure, or ethnic and cultural background. In this respect, every family has the potential to support and improve the academic achievement of its children.

When parents hold high expectations for their children and encourage them to work hard, they support student success in school.

When parents hold high expectations for their children and encourage them to work hard, they support student success in school. Many parent programs offer workshops, hands-on training opportunities, or conduct home visits that help parents support their children's learning at home. These sessions offer ideas to families about how to help students with curriculum-related activities, homework, and other academic decisions and planning.

- During the 1995–96 school year, all first-grade teachers at Ferguson Elementary received training from Temple University to improve parent involvement. First-grade teachers, Temple trainers, and parents first met to discuss how the school should and could involve parents. Then all first-grade teachers met with Temple trainers to discuss priorities, chief among them being how to get parents to support learning at home and reinforce what students learn at school. Two of the first-grade teachers, along with Temple staff, then offered parents a series of five 2-hour workshops on how to help children with reading and math at home. Parents learned, for example, how to use a list of common words to help children make sentences, learn grammar, and sharpen their reading skills; they also learned how to use a "number line" manipulative to help children practice adding and subtracting. Each year, parents who have completed this training help train the parents of new first-grade students.

- Schools in the Stockton Unified School District offer parents workshops on hands-on teaching techniques to use with their children in math and language arts. At these workshops, parents can "make and take" educational materials, such as flash cards and board games, to use with their children at home.

- Buhrer Elementary School in Cleveland conducts family math and science workshops, where children and their families spend an evening at the school working on math and science activities together. In 1996, 35 parents attended the family math workshop. Buhrer also provides families with curriculum packets that parents can use at home; for example, the packets for primary school children included short stories and counting exercises using household materials.

- Parents at Wendell Phillips Magnet School in Kansas City asked for and received weekly student progress reports to help them keep track of the areas in which their children needed more work. A curriculum report will be issued to parents beginning in the second semester of the 1996–97 school year. As one focus group parent commented, "If I know what my child is studying I can help him at home, and I can see what progress he is making."

- More than 60 families with children under the age of eight are enrolled in the Buffalo Parent Center's Even Start program, which is offered in collaboration with the local adult learning center. Parents in the adult education program agree to accompany their children to the Parent Center for a minimum of 12 hours a week. Time at the

Parent Center is set aside for "parent and child time" in the early childhood center, where families can use developmentally appropriate computer programs. The parent center also employs home liaisons who conduct home visits with the Even Start families once a week.

Several other parent programs inform parents how to help their children develop study skills to prepare for required tests; parents also learn how to interpret test results to identify the areas in which their children may need further assistance. In focus groups some parents voiced their frustration at receiving the results of student testing and the school's ranking but no information about what the numbers mean. In addition, parent workshops offer parents important information to help them plan for their children's educational future. For example, Roosevelt High School, a schoolwide program in the Dallas (Texas) Independent School District, invites parents to an evening class to review the state assessment instrument and the skills their children are expected to demonstrate on the test. The staff also provide parent training on helping students develop study skills to prepare for the required tests. Parents also receive training and information on how to prepare their children to attend college (e.g., completing financial aid forms, obtaining references, preparing for required standardized tests).

Preparing parents to participate in school decisionmaking. Many programs encourage parents to join school committees that make decisions on curriculum policies, parent involvement activities, the school budget, and reform initiatives. In schoolwide program schools, administrators and teachers can play crucial roles in keeping parents informed about the program and the guidelines they need to follow. One focus group parent said, "[The principal and Title I home-school liaison] make sure we keep up with what is going on with the Title I plan and procedures.... we discuss this in our school advisory council meetings...we know who we receive the funding from and how we spend it. The parents helped write the Title I [schoolwide] plan." In addition, several parents participating in focus groups said that they had been involved in writing the Title I required school-parent compact, and commented that their participation provided some clear guidance on what parents need to do to help their children succeed academically and also gave them the sense that they were doing their part. Many schools offer training to help parents become effective decisionmakers.

- The Parent Resource Center in Stockton prepares parents for decisionmaking roles through special training on topics such as creating, implementing, and evaluating a Title I school plan, understanding school budgets, and conducting successful meetings. Several parent participants have become members, board members, and officers of two organizations that advocate parental involvement: The California Association of Compensatory Education and the National Coalition of Title I/Chapter 1 Parents.

- Parents who serve on the Atenville Elementary School Action Research Team receive training on action research two or three times a year from the Institute for Responsive Education in Boston, Massachusetts. One year, training sessions focused on education reform strategies such as working collaboratively, developing action plans, and goal-setting. In 1996, several Atenville parents put these skills to work as they successfully lobbied the Board of Education to keep the school's K–6 configuration.

Volunteer preparation. Rather than simply asking and expecting parents to volunteer in schools, several programs offer parents training on how to volunteer useful assistance to school staff and students.

- Parents at Atenville Elementary School volunteer as teacher aides in the classroom, provide teachers and administrators with logistical support, and help supervise children in the library and during lunch and recess periods. To prepare parents for these duties, the school provides two volunteer training sessions each fall to inform parents about school policies on discipline and confidentiality and to offer guidance on assisting teachers in the classroom as aides and tutors. Parents also learn about basic school office procedures, such as operating the copier machine and answering telephones. In 1995–96, 100 parents representing almost half of the families at the school participated in volunteer training.

- For the past 2 years, the Maine SAD #3 district volunteer coordinator has directed parent volunteer activities. The coordinator recruits volunteer coordinators for each school, and these individuals—typically parents—survey parents and teachers, distribute volunteer handbooks, and coordinate the yearly volunteer activities and schedules. To support individual school volunteer efforts, the district hosts an evening program for parents at the beginning of each year to inform them of volunteer activities available at each school. In addition, the district coordinator presents an orientation workshop at each school—also at the beginning of each year—to teach parents how to become more involved in their children's school and education. This year, the district volunteer coordinator plans to bring all of the coordinators together to compile a districtwide volunteer manual. During the 1995–96 school year, volunteers contributed 3,500 hours to the district's public schools. The coordinator also organizes an annual teacher workshop entitled Building Effective Relationships with Volunteers to provide participants with ideas and skills for viewing parents as a resource.

Information and Training Provided Through Family Resource Centers

Family resource centers offer many types of supports to families.

Family resource centers offer many types of supports to families. These include parenting classes, the organization of volunteer activities for schools, and the provision of information and ideas to families about how to help children with homework and other curriculum-related activities. Some centers also provide families with services such as the transportation and child care needed for families to participate in center activities, as well as referrals for health, employment, or housing needs. All operate under the guiding philosophy that schools and families need broad-based support to educate children.

- The Family Resource Center at Charter Oak School in the West Hartford School District, West Hartford, Connecticut, was one of the first state-established family resource centers directly linked to a local public school system. The center works closely with school staff and the parent-teacher organization to sponsor family activities and facilitate home-school communication. About 30–35 parents of school-age

children visit the center each week. It offers a comfortable place where parents can read the latest books on parenting or meet teachers for lunch, and families can obtain child care referrals and scholarship information, receive counseling for problems, use the homework center, and participate in adult education classes. School-age children can register for mini-courses or borrow a toy for the weekend.

- The Greensville County Public Schools' Mobile Parent Resource Center in Emporia, Virginia, offers a model for making parent resource centers more accessible to rural parents. The mobile parent resource center is a 34-foot customized bus that serves parents of students receiving Title I services and travels to four sites a day remaining at least 2 hours at each site. It houses two classrooms equipped with adjustable tables, chairs, bulletin boards, chalkboards, televisions, a video-cassette recorder, cassette players, and laptop computers. Instructional materials include parenting videos and kits, books, newspapers, magazines, computer software, models, and samples of instructional materials that parents can check out to use with their children. Parents are trained as tutors to work with their children. Parents receive help in selecting appropriate books to read with their children, and see videos of families reading and learning together. The parent resource center serves 12–18 parents at a time. Six area businesses allow the parent resource center to visit their work sites so that employees who are parents can visit before or after work or during breaks.

Outreach Strategies to Keep Parents Informed

Schools that are successful in building school-family partnerships develop and use outreach mechanisms to channel information to parents on an ongoing basis.

Schools that are successful in building school-family partnerships develop and use outreach mechanisms to channel information to parents on an ongoing basis. These mechanisms include distributing weekly or monthly parent newsletters, posting fliers in places where parents congregate, developing parent handbooks, making telephone calls, and conducting home visits. One focus group participant underscored the importance of school-home contacts that share positive information about children as well as problems the child may be having.

Several of the programs profiled for this report have developed special strategies for ensuring that each family receives personal, customized communication from their child's school throughout the school year:

- Schoolwide programs at Turnbull Learning Academy in the San Mateo-Foster City School District, San Mateo, California, and South Delta Elementary School in the South Delta School District, Rolling Fork, Mississippi, implemented weekly take-home folders that include a parent participation sheet, information on upcoming events, and recent curriculum activities and graded tests. Parents sign and return folders each week. Teachers and parents report that the folders provide important academic information for parents, teachers, and students, and help increase parent-school communication.

- At Atenville Elementary, parent volunteers call all parents monthly to inform them about school events and to solicit feedback on past and future parent involvement activities. Several programs also reach out through home-school liaisons and parent coordinators, whose prime responsibility is to keep parents informed and maintain an open line of communication among families, schools, and community agencies.

- Parent volunteer coordinators in South Bay Union Elementary School District in Imperial Beach, California, also make home visits and inform families about social services offered throughout the community.

Maine's SAD #3 uses parent outreach to help bring community members and school staff together in support of shared educational goals. The district sponsors Community Day, an annual communitywide outreach and training effort. It brings families and community members together with teachers and school staff to participate in team-building activities, set educational goals, and devise strategies for accomplishing these goals. As a result of one recent Community Day, the town of Liberty initiated a plan to open a community library. Open to the general public, the Community Day activities are advertised through direct mailings, spots on a local cable station, newspaper advertisements, and local grassroots networking.

Information and Training for School Staff

Some schools offer teachers, principals, and school staff information and strategies on how to reach out to parents and work with them as partners.

Some schools offer teachers, principals, and school staff information and strategies on how to reach out to parents and work with them as partners. This can be especially beneficial to school staff who typically received little or no preservice training in these skills. In addition, changes in family structures and community life can require new or different family outreach strategies from what may have been effective in the past. Professional development activities may include sessions on making telephone calls, home visits, and other contact strategies, students' home culture and appreciating diversity, communication skills for parent-teacher conferences, and involving parents as leaders and decisionmakers in the schools.

Special training for teachers and other school staff can play a key role in dispelling some of the misconceptions and stereotypes that become barriers to effective partnerships between parents and teachers. Parents in some schools, for example, take teachers on Community Walks that introduce teachers to the local neighborhood and help them understand the lives of their students outside of school. One parent in an inner-city high school described the purpose of these walks at her school:

> We had to educate them [the teachers] about the community [and] what children here may be going through... [On] Community Walks some teachers were actually amazed that some of the parents live in nice homes that are well taken care of. On these walks it became apparent that the teachers had a lot of stereotypes about the kids they were teaching and their families....

Other schools have found that engaging parent coordinators or parent volunteers to train school staff not only builds parents' leadership skills but also offers teachers the opportunity to learn about families from parents' perspectives.

Additional training activities include the following:

- Staff at Hueco Elementary, a schoolwide program in the Socorro Independent School District, El Paso, Texas, receive training for home visits and family outreach from a successful parent coordinator employed in a neighboring district. Staff on the family support team also receive training for supporting and working with parents of students with academic or behavioral problems.

- In 1996–97, Stockton, California, mentor parents who were trained at the district's Parent Resource Center spent 5,000 hours in the schools providing professional development to school staff on parent involvement and home-school communication. Among other activities, mentor parents conducted four workshops on obstacles to parent involvement in schools, including parents' negative prior experiences with school that may discourage them from participating, and teacher bias that may result from a parent's different socioeconomic status, race, gender, physical appearance, or language.

- The Alamo Navajo Community School, a schoolwide program operated by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, Magaleno, New Mexico, hosts a cultural orientation program to inform new teachers (almost all of whom are non-Navajo) about the Navajo culture and how to form positive, culturally respectful relationships with Navajo parents. Teachers visit students' homes and learn about reservation life and the rural conditions in which students live; teachers visit an average of eight homes each month.

Restructuring Schools to Support Family Involvement

Developing a successful school-family partnership must be a whole school endeavor, not the work of a single person or program.

Developing a successful school-family partnership must be a whole school endeavor, not the work of a single person or program. Traditional school organization and practices, especially in secondary schools, often discourage family members from becoming involved. For example, survey data show that parents of older children are less likely to attend a school event or volunteer at their child's school than parents of younger children. Sixty-one percent of principals of Title I elementary schools report that most or all of their parents attend regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences, compared with 22 percent of principals of Title I middle schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

To create a welcoming environment for parents, one that enlists their support in helping their children achieve, schools sometimes adopt changes that make them more personal and inviting places.

Schools can reorganize (dividing into schools-within-schools), or adopt block scheduling (which includes longer class periods), for example, to promote closer interaction between teachers and students and, by extension, between teachers and families. Schools can solicit parental input to help make decisions on curriculum, course scheduling, assessment, and budget matters. Traditional parent participation events can be redefined to create more meaningful ways to welcome and involve parents in school life. Whatever steps schools take to develop close partnerships with families on behalf of students' learning, schools that are most successful are prepared to reconsider all of their established methods of doing business and to restructure in ways that will make them less hierarchical, more personal, and more accessible to parents. Restructuring schools to create a more personalized environment for students and their families is an especially important issue for secondary schools, where parents face special barriers to becoming involved and where parent involvement does in fact drop off significantly.

Designing Parent Involvement Around Family Needs

For many successful schools, the first step in the restructuring process is to assess families' interests and needs.

For many successful schools, the first step in the restructuring process is to assess families' interests and needs. By asking parents to share their interests, needs, ideas, and goals for family involvement on an ongoing basis, families and staff members can work together to make family involvement a centerpiece of school reform. By contrast, families that hesitate to become involved in schools often complain that administrators and teachers develop parent involvement strategies based on what they think parents want and need, and not on what parents say they want and need.

Several programs highlighted in this report address this concern by conducting needs assessments through parent surveys, focus groups, or door-to-door neighborhood walks to gather ideas from parents about how best to promote family involvement.

- Staff members at the district-sponsored Buffalo Parent Center develop and plan their services based on surveys and information gathered from monthly "town meetings," where parents voice concerns and suggestions.

- As already noted, Roosevelt High School conducted a Walk for Success event, where teams of faculty, parents, and other community members walked door to door to talk with parents about their needs and gather ideas about how to improve the school.

Parents as Partners in Schoolwide Restructuring

Successful schools include parents as active partners in the school restructuring process.

Successful schools include parents as active partners in the school restructuring process. Rather than the traditional hierarchical relationship between families and schools, where school staff make unilateral decisions, successful parent involvement approaches work to develop parents as leaders and equal partners in the schooling process. One way to do this is to create organizational structures

for parent participation, such as parent and volunteer committees. Parents can also serve on other school decisionmaking committees, such as site-based management councils and school improvement teams. As members of these committees, parents can, for example, share ideas and help make decisions on school policies related to the budget, teacher and principal hiring, schoolwide plans, and parent involvement activities. Together, parents and staff members develop school reform initiatives to facilitate closer student, teacher, and parent relations and to increase student achievement.

Several schools profiled for this report have developed creative ways to involve parents in school decisionmaking:

- Parents at Roosevelt High School serve on "core teams" to address school reform issues. Recently, parents played an active role in curriculum reform by helping secure a waiver from the Texas Education Agency to implement block scheduling, a plan they anticipated would improve both student attendance and achievement. (While both have risen recently, this may be due to many factors.) Core team parents also work closely with the community to assess family needs and strengths and to develop an action agenda for the school. A school organizer for the Alliance Schools Initiative in Texas said "The most challenging aspect of getting parents involved is to help them understand that they don't always need to be at school for a particular problem, but they can also be part of a constituency that develops a broad-based plan to improve the school."

- Turnbull Learning Academy involves parents on decisionmaking committees such as the parent leadership committee and the school site council. Parents on the schoolsite council help develop the school improvement plan, a process that includes planning new programs and reviewing existing programs and the school budget. After scheduling a vote to determine whether parents were interested, parent leadership at Turnbull developed a proposal for a voluntary school uniform policy. An overwhelming majority of parents voted in favor of the policy, which the school board approved in the spring of 1995.

- At Atenville Elementary, parents stressed to parent leaders and school staff on a communitywide steering committee that they were concerned about the difficult transition for students as they moved from elementary schools to seventh grade at the local high school. As a result, a subcommittee on transitions was added to the communitywide school improvement steering committee. The subcommittee recommended block scheduling, similar to the scheduling that students encounter in high school, for fourth- through sixth-graders. The proposal was accepted and students now receive instruction in three blocks: (1) language arts, (2) math, and (3) social studies and science. All state-required subjects are integrated into these three areas.

New Uses of School Space

Schools can take simple steps to make parents feel welcome.

Schools can take simple steps to make parents feel welcome. For example, hanging a welcome sign or posting a parent volunteer in the entrance hall to welcome visitors, sign them in, and direct

them to classrooms or the office makes a much more comforting first impression than the ubiquitous sign instructing visitors to "report to the office." Similarly, many parents express uneasiness over the elaborate security measures schools use to combat violence and drugs. Schools could consider creating alternative entrances for parents where security measures are less obtrusive.

Several schools have taken additional steps to make their schools physically welcoming for parents. They have turned unused classrooms into on-site family or parent centers, giving parents a space in which to convene for parent-teacher meetings, borrow books and other learning materials, hold workshops, conduct volunteer activities, or simply have coffee and lunch with other parents and school staff.

- South Delta Elementary's parent resource center is open every school day and contains curriculum supplies, copier and laminating machines, and work tables so that parents have the tools they need to help teachers prepare lessons and activities.

- As of the 1996–97 school year, Ferguson Elementary school is structured into four kindergarten through grade 5 learning communities, each of which occupies its own space and benefits from the support of a parent support teacher or community leader. Each community leader is responsible for supporting the curriculum, instruction, and discipline within a learning community. In addition, Ferguson's parent center, which is located in an empty classroom on the second floor of the school, welcomes parents each school day. The center offers parents resources such as information on parenting skills, listings of job opportunities, and information about available programs for parents at the local library and at nearby community centers. An average of six or seven parents visit the parent center each day. The center is staffed in the mornings by a paid parent who operates a lending library of educational materials such as "big book" storybooks and accompanying audiotapes and activity guides that parents can use with their children at home. Temple University provides training and support for the parent who staffs the center.

Moving Beyond Traditional School-Family Activities

Listening to parents and working with them to build family involvement often leads to innovative, meaningful participation activities that extend beyond the traditional back-to-school nights and bake sales.

Listening to parents and working with them to build family involvement often leads to innovative, meaningful participation activities that extend beyond the traditional back-to-school nights and bake sales. For example, Buhrer Elementary's Block Parent Meetings take school events to families who live far away from school, enabling them to become informed about school issues and stay in touch with teachers, principals, and other parents. Ferguson Elementary's Parents Make a Difference conference offers parents an opportunity to form ties with teachers and other parents, take a close look at classroom life, and attend workshops on student learning. Roosevelt High School's Walk for Success program takes teachers and other school staff out into the surrounding neighborhoods to talk with parents and begin to develop meaningful parent-school partnerships. Other examples of events that bring parents, students, and teachers closer together include:

- At Cane Run Elementary, parents accompany school staff on out-of-town retreats to discuss curriculum planning, assessment, and other educational issues. Teachers say that the retreats provide an opportunity to "educate parents on views from inside the school looking out, rather than outside looking in." Teachers and parents also have a chance to gain a better understanding of each other's perspectives. These types of activities may have contributed to the growing Cane Run PTA membership, which has increased from 60 to 700 since 1990.

- In response to its high rate of poverty and mobility among migrant workers, beginning with the 1996–97 academic year, Rodney B. Cox Elementary School became a full-service school, providing dental care, counseling, and health care to students and their families. A new building where some of these services will be available was recently completed on the school's campus. Additional services will be available by referral. Parents participated in the design of the building, which houses the nurse and the health paraprofessional, the dentist, a parent involvement office, and migrant student recruiters. The building provides a kitchen for students and adults to use. School leaders hope that offering these health and social services to families will allow students to concentrate more effectively on achieving success in school.

Bridging School-Family Differences

Language and cultural differences as well as differences in educational attainment separating families and school staff can make communication and family participation in school activities difficult.

Language and cultural differences as well as differences in educational attainment separating families and school staff can make communication and family participation in school activities difficult. For example, survey data show that parents who do not speak English at home are less likely to participate in school-based activities, and more likely to participate in fewer activities over the course of the school year (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Still, many Title I schools with innovative leadership and creative, hard-working staff have found ways to bridge these differences and cultivate meaningful school-family partnerships.

Reaching Out to Parents with Little Formal Education

Schools today work with a diverse group of parents, some of whom may not easily understand all of the written communications sent to them, and may see themselves as unprepared to help their children with homework or schoolwork. In addition, parents who have bad memories about their own experiences in school may have trouble helping their children with schoolwork, especially in subject areas that they themselves did not master. Among the schools we studied, some creative solutions to this barrier included parent meetings that review activities nonreaders can carry out with their children to promote literacy. At South Delta Elementary, school staff focus on home learning activities for nonreading parents by using newspapers. For example, parents and children look at ads and make price comparisons or discuss the weather, which often includes pictorial representations of the weekly forecast. At Turnbull, the bilingual parent involvement coordinator makes telephone calls to relay written information about student progress to nonreaders on a weekly basis.

Even for parents who read well, the prospect of helping with their children's schoolwork is often daunting.

Even for parents who read well, the prospect of helping with their children's schoolwork is often daunting. Many parents are haunted by their own memories of school, and are uncomfortable in a setting that brings those memories back. One school district hired a third party contractor to operate a Mom and Pop Mobile to expand its outreach to include those parents who are uncomfortable in school settings. The Mom and Pop Mobile specifically targets parents of private school students receiving Title I services. Through the traveling resource center, these parents learn effective parent involvement strategies, such as how to help students engage in learning activities at home.

Parents may also doubt their ability to help their children master new content, especially in math and science. Schools can help allay these fears by giving parents a chance to experience firsthand what their children are learning in an environment that is pleasant and nonthreatening.

- The Family Math and Family Science nights held in Maine's SAD #3, that attract about 200 families districtwide each year, are modeled after the program developed by the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California. Children and parents together explore math or science activities, including games that families can then play at home.

- Twice a year, the Alamo Navajo Community School's Parents as Teachers Program dismisses students at 1:00 to make time for an hour and a half hands-on workshop for parents and their children. Topics include language and math skills development, reading, and cooking with children. School staff also combine parent meetings and open houses with community events, such as basketball games, in order to draw more parents to the school.

Breaking the Language Barrier

Fifty-five percent of Title I schools report that they serve parents with limited English skills (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Although differences in language between parents and school staff often exist in large urban areas with growing immigrant populations such as Imperial Beach, California, or Cleveland, Ohio, they also challenge schools in rural areas such as Alamo Navajo Community School, where the entire reservation community is Navajo and only 35 to 40 percent of the school's professional staff are Navajo.

Most strategies for addressing language barriers include some form of bilingual services for communicating with families about school programs and children's progress. Many schools successfully use bilingual parent liaisons, instructional aides, counselors, and parent volunteers to reach out to families through a variety of school-home communications as well as parent workshops or classes.

Translation services. Several schools we studied provide translation services for parent involvement activities including school-home communications, parenting training, and participation in decisionmaking and school governance.

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- Cleveland Public Schools requires each school to develop a school-community council to provide families with information about school programs and discuss school governance issues. At Buhrer Elementary, bilingual teachers or volunteers attend the meetings to serve as translators. In addition, Buhrer Elementary School publishes both its parent handbook and newsletter in Spanish, English, and Arabic. Bilingual instructional aides or parent volunteers make calls and translate messages from teachers to parents, often uncovering previously unknown reasons for student absences or discipline problems.

- The bilingual parent involvement coordinator at Turnbull Learning Academy and bilingual staff at Hueco Elementary ensure that all school-home communications, including newsletters, announcements, and information about student progress, are published in both Spanish and English. In addition, at Hueco, the principal and assistant principal conduct all school-home communications and parent workshops and meetings in both Spanish and English. To ensure that parents can actively participate in these events, the district used federal funds to purchase translation equipment that includes a wireless microphone broadcaster, which the translator speaks into, and headsets with FM receivers for those needing translation. Due in part to these efforts to reach more parents, the number of Hueco parents involved in at least one activity increased from 30 percent in the 1994–95 school year to 80 percent in 1996–97.

- Alamo Navajo Community School uses a local AM radio station to address the communication barriers between Navajo families and the many non-Navajo school staff. School staff use the station to announce upcoming meetings and events, broadcast educational programming for both adults and children, make health-related public service announcements, and interview school and community members about current issues or events. About 70 percent of the programming is in Navajo. In addition, home liaisons fluent in both Navajo and English conduct an average of 25 home visits each month to address discipline, academic, and attendance problems, as well as help families with paperwork for programs such as special education or translate during parent-teacher conferences.

- At Cox Elementary, bilingual teachers attend the monthly parent events to translate for Spanish speakers as part of events ranging from "make and take" workshops and other academically oriented activities to multicultural presentations.

Workshops and classes in parents' first language. Several districts and schools also conduct bilingual workshops or classes designed to provide parents with information and ideas about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities. At Turnbull Learning Academy, parent training on topics such as helping children with homework are offered in Spanish and English. The South Bay Union Elementary School District offers a wide variety of year-round parenting classes in several languages. Parent training that ultimately helps students learn at home during the nonschool hours often includes adult ESL classes. The Family Resource Center at Charter Oak School, the Buffalo Parent Center, and Turnbull Learning Academy regularly offer ESL classes for parents and other adults.

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Promoting Cultural Understanding

Although breaking the language barrier between English speakers and those whose primary language is other than English constitutes a giant step toward increasing parent involvement in their children's education, building bridges with families of different cultures and backgrounds also deserves special attention if *all* families are to feel comfortable participating in school activities.

In many schools, a home-school liaison can play a crucial role in reaching out to parents of different backgrounds and building trust between home and school.

In many schools, a home-school liaison can play a crucial role in reaching out to parents of different backgrounds and building trust between home and school. Usually the home-school liaison is a parent who lives in the neighborhood or someone else with close ties to both the school and the community. Because the home-school liaison is closely identified with the community and shares the same cultural background with parents, he or she is well-equipped to reach out to parents and invite them to become more involved in their children's education. Through the home-school liaison, schools can build relationships with parents founded on understanding and trust.

In addition, many schools offer training to parents and school staff aimed specifically at bridging cultural differences between home and school. Some of these efforts include:

- At both Hueco Elementary and Turnbull Learning Academy, school staff have taken special steps to address cultural differences that stand in the way of parent involvement. For example, staff at these schools pointed out that Hispanic culture regards teachers with admiration and respect, which can result in parents entrusting their child's education solely to their teachers and not participating themselves. To encourage parents to take a more active role, the staff at Hueco emphasize the importance of parents as their children's first teacher and stress how much the school needs and values their involvement; they emphasize these points during the school orientation and at each workshop, parent-teacher conference, and through the newsletter. Staff at Turnbull hold a workshop each fall that emphasizes these same points.

- At Buhrer Elementary, a school-community council meeting involving parents and staff recently focused on Arab culture and how it differs from other cultures, in order to help promote understanding among Arab parents and other parents and staff at the school.

Tapping External Supports for Partnerships

Many Title I schools have nourished and strengthened school-family partnerships by tapping the supports available in their local communities and beyond.

Many Title I schools have nourished and strengthened school-family partnerships by tapping the supports available in their local communities and beyond. Collaborative efforts to provide fami-

lies and schools with the tools they need to support learning can ultimately benefit all those interested in and affected by the quality of children's education. Among the Title I programs we studied, successful parent involvement strategies often grew out of school-community partnerships with local businesses, agencies, and colleges and universities, as well as supports provided by school districts and states.

School-Community Partnerships that Marshall Additional Resources

Schools rarely have the funds, staff, or space for all the family involvement activities they want or need to offer. Many have forged partnerships with local businesses, agencies, and colleges or universities to provide family services. Among the schools in our study, these services included educational programming and a homework hotline, social services such as prevention of substance abuse and child abuse prevention, conferences and workshops, adult education, health services, refurbished school facilities, and refreshments for and transportation to school-sponsored events. The following examples highlight some strategies schools and communities can use together to expand opportunities for students and their families.

- The Wendell Phillips Visual and Performing Arts Magnet School works with community partners to meet both the academic and basic survival needs of its students. Hairdressers come to the school to give students free hair cuts, a dental program gives uninsured students free check-ups and dental work, and a business partner provides employee volunteers for mentoring and tutoring.

- Last year, representatives from two community organizations, Alivaine Inc., and the Child Crisis Center, offered parenting education classes at Hueco Elementary at no cost to parents. A childcare worker from the local YMCA also volunteered to provide free childcare during parent classes. Local businesses contributed to the Super Readers program, in which children receive awards for the number of books they read at home or have read to them; businesses also provided pizza parties for classes with the most parent volunteer hours.

- A local bank and newspaper sponsor the Education Connection at Buhrer Elementary, which is a homework voice mail system that enables teachers, instructional aides, and the school psychologist to leave outgoing messages such as a daily homework assignment and to receive messages from parents who want to ask questions or set appointments. Through a partnership with Baldwin-Wallace College, Buhrer offers parents GED courses. The school has scheduled parent-teacher conferences at the local library and YMCA, which are closer to parents' homes, and the principal contacts parents' employers if necessary to request time off so parents can meet with teachers.

- Ferguson Elementary offers an adult evening school in conjunction with nearby Temple University. Last year, classes included computer literacy and self-esteem building and were free of charge to parents. This year, classes will include computer literacy, ESL, and Spanish. Teachers, parents, and other community members receive stipends from Temple to teach the courses, and Temple also provides stipends for childcare as an incentive for parents to attend.

District and state supports for family involvement can include policies, funding, training, and family services that contribute to successful family involvement.

District and state supports for family involvement can include policies, funding, training, and family services that contribute to successful family involvement. With the backing of these district and state supports, school-family partnerships have a strong chance of succeeding, and schools can draw on a broad system of expertise and experience. District and state-run parent resource centers, described earlier, are one example of how schools can benefit.

A statewide effort we reviewed, the Alliance Schools Initiative, is a partnership among the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Interfaith Education Fund (TIEF), and the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation (TIAF). Its mission is to develop a strong decisionmaking, community-based constituency of parents, teachers, and community leaders who work to improve student achievement in low-income communities throughout Texas. The TEA provides maximum flexibility to participating campuses willing to redesign their educational programs. Teachers and principals agree to collaborate with parents, with each other, and with TIAF network organizations to design and implement reform strategies. The TIEF coordinators train parents, teachers, and principals in strategies to work together to improve their schools. Many Alliance schools receive competitive Investment Capital Fund grants from the TEA, which they use for staff development, parent and community training, curriculum improvement, and enrichment programs.

In addition, the schools we reviewed provided many examples of districtwide programs or strategies supporting school-family partnerships:

- Jefferson County Public Schools, which serve Louisville, Kentucky, recently contracted with the Right Question Project to work with half of its middle schools in improving parent involvement. As part of this effort, parents of students at Western Middle School will receive training in helping their children develop critical thinking skills, evaluating their children's educational progress, and helping with homework and project assignments. One indicator of recently improved parent involvement at Western is an increase in the number of parent conferences. From fall 1995 to spring 1996, the number of conferences increased from 90 to 280.

- The DeForest School District in Wisconsin teamed with the local public library, which is also the local Even Start site, to sponsor a family involvement and literacy program using Epstein's framework of six types of family involvement (Epstein, 1995). It includes adult basic education and ESL as well as parenting activities. Regular participation in Even Start and Family Involvement and Literacy programs has increased by at least 25 percent over the last 3 years.

- South Delta Elementary School offers parents district-sponsored training through the Title I office. Last year, these training sessions explained the scoring process and the results of standardized tests as well as a workshop on how parents can increase their children's vocabulary. In addition, a district tutorial liaison instructs parents and children in the use of computer equipment.

- Comprehensive family services, such as those offered through the South Bay Union Elementary School District's Interagency Committee, can provide the base of well-being that families need to contribute time and energy to their children's education. This committee, developed in 1990, responded to the growing need for schools and community services to collaborate to meet the increasing health, literacy, and social service needs of its many disadvantaged families. Representatives from 25 different health, social service, public and governmental agencies piloted several school-based programs, including adult literacy, family violence prevention, and support groups for students and parents.

Effects on Students and Families

Effective school-family partnerships benefit all involved—school staff, parents, and students.

Effective school-family partnerships benefit all involved—school staff, parents, and students. Research demonstrates that parent involvement can be an important contributor to student achievement. Effective school-family partnerships can have important benefits for parents as well, helping them to perceive their children's school in a more positive light, enhancing their sense of efficacy as parents, and changing their perceptions of their children as learners (Ames, 1993; Epstein, 1991).

Student Achievement

The experience of the schools and district programs reviewed for this Idea Book supports the conclusion that family involvement can have significant effects on student achievement. The appendix presents evidence of improvement in student outcomes, wherever it was available, for each of the school or district programs highlighted in this Idea Book. Although it is impossible to attribute student achievement gains or other positive outcomes in any of these schools or districts solely to their parent involvement activities, it does appear that many schools that make parent involvement a priority also see student outcomes improve. For example, of the 13 schools highlighted in this Idea Book and reviewed in the appendix, 8 report gains in student achievement over the last 1 to 3 years, 4 report gains in attendance rates or attendance rates remaining consistently over 95 percent, and 2 report substantial decreases in disciplinary referrals over the last several years. These positive outcomes may be due to increased parent involvement itself, or, what is more likely, to a whole constellation of factors, including a strong instructional program and a commitment to high standards for all students. Further study of these programs would be needed to determine the relative influence of these various factors. Nevertheless, it appears that strong parent involvement is an important feature of many schools that succeed in raising student achievement.

Other Indicators of Success

Most of the schools and programs highlighted in this Idea Book offer evidence that their parent involvement efforts have changed parents in some way. For example, most schools report that more parents are volunteering at school, attending parent-teacher conferences, or signing up for parenting workshops. Evidence of effects on parents among the schools featured here, however, is limited to these measures of participation in school-based activities. In fact, there is little indication that most

practitioners in general have done much to evaluate their parent involvement efforts beyond these "body counts." There is a need for evaluation designs that will help practitioners understand, for example, how various parent involvement strategies affect parents' interactions with their children at home, what strategies work best with varied populations of parents, and what kinds of staff development prompt better practice among school staff.

Conclusions about Establishing and Sustaining Partnerships

Schools that succeed in involving large numbers of parents and other family members in the education of their children invest energy in finding solutions for problems, not excuses.

Schools that succeed in involving large numbers of parents and other family members in the education of their children invest energy in finding solutions for problems, not excuses. Successful schools view children's success as a shared responsibility, and all stakeholders—including parents, administrators, teachers, and community leaders—play important roles in supporting children's learning. Indeed, successful schools adopt a team approach, where each partner assumes responsibilities for the success of the school-family partnership.

At the same time that successful partnerships share accountability, specific stakeholders must assume individual responsibility in order for partnerships to work. Above all, schools, under the leadership of principals, possess the primary responsibility for initiating school-family partnerships. Schools can invest heavily in professional development that supports family involvement, create time for staff to work with parents, supply necessary resources, design innovative strategies to meet the needs of diverse families, and provide useful information to families on how they can contribute to their children's learning.

Once schools initiate the dialogue and bring parents in as full partners, families are typically ready and willing to assume an equal responsibility for the success of their children. Ideally, this partnership takes place in a context where policymakers, community groups, and employers share the goals of the school and actively contribute to the attainment of those goals. In sum, a broad-based coalition of like-minded stakeholders is the foundation of any successful partnership. When community members work together, all stakeholders—and especially children—stand to win.

Although the most appropriate strategies for a particular community will depend on local interests, needs, and resources, successful approaches to promoting family involvement in the education of their children share an emphasis on innovation and flexibility. The experiences of the local schools and districts included here suggest the following guidelines for effective home-school partnerships:

- ***There is no "one size fits all" approach to partnerships.*** Build on what works well locally. Begin the school-family partnership by identifying, with families, the strengths, interests, and needs of families, students, and school staff, and design strategies that respond to identified strengths, interests, and needs.

- ***Training and staff development is an essential investment.*** Strengthen the school-family partnership with professional development and training for all school staff as well as parents and other family members. Both school staff and families need the knowledge and skills that enable them to work with one another and with the larger community to support children's learning.

- ***Communication is the foundation of effective partnerships.*** Plan strategies that accommodate the varied language and cultural needs as well as lifestyles and work schedules of school staff and families. Even the best planned school-family partnerships will fail if the participants cannot communicate effectively.

- ***Flexibility and diversity are key.*** Recognize that effective parent involvement takes many forms that may not necessarily require parents' presence at a workshop, meeting, or school. The emphasis should be on parents helping children learn, and this can happen in schools, homes, or elsewhere in a community.

- ***Projects need to take advantage of the training, assistance, and funding offered by sources external to schools.*** These can include school districts, community organizations and public agencies, local colleges and universities, state education agencies, and Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers. While Title I program funds support the parent involvement activities of many programs featured here, several have increased the resources available for parent involvement activities by looking beyond school walls.

- ***Change takes time.*** Recognize that developing a successful school-family partnership requires continued effort over time, and that solving one problem often creates new challenges. Further, a successful partnership requires the involvement of many stakeholders, not just a few.

- ***Projects need to regularly assess the effects of the partnership using multiple indicators.*** These may include indicators of family, school staff, and community participation in and satisfaction with school-related activities. They may also include measures of the quality of school-family interactions; and varied indicators of student educational progress.

Although success in school-family partnerships rarely comes easily, the pay-offs to children and their educational success can be well worth the hard work required to forge and sustain the partnerships.

Notes

[1] Title I of the ESEA was amended by the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994.

[2] This Idea Book was developed as part of a study, required under IASA and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), to identify and describe common barriers to effective family involvement in the education of children participating in the Title I program and successful local programs that improve parent involvement and the performance of these children (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

[3] A schoolwide program school may use its Title I Part A funds combined with other federal education funds to upgrade the school's entire educational program rather than to deliver federally supported services only to identified children. By affecting the entire program of instruction, the overall education of children in high poverty schools can be improved. Beginning with the 1996–97 school year, Title I participating schools with a poverty level of at least 50 percent can choose to become a schoolwide program.

[4] The role of the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers is to support and assist states, school districts, schools, tribes, community-based organizations, and other recipients of funds under the IASA by providing technical assistance in: (1) implementing school reform to improve teaching and learning for all students; (2) adopting, adapting, and implementing promising and proven practices for improving teaching and learning; and (3) coordinating IASA recipients' school reform programs with other educational plans and activities so that all students, particularly students at risk of educational failure, are provided opportunities to meet challenging state content and performance standards.

[5] The Idea Book is a companion publication to a 1997 U.S. Department of Education report to Congress that identifies and describes: (1) common barriers to effective parental involvement in the education of Title I participating children; and (2) successful local policies and programs that improve parental involvement and the performance of participating children.

[6] Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended (Pub. L. 105–17), requires that children and youth with disabilities have an IEP. The IEP is a written document developed in a team meeting. A representative of the school who is qualified to provide (or supervise the provision of) special education and the student's teacher(s) must attend. Parents must be invited and may attend. The student may also attend, at the discretion of the parents.

[7] A schoolwide program may use its Title I Part A funds, combined with other federal education funds, to upgrade the school's entire educational program rather than to deliver federally supported services only to identified children. By affecting the entire program of instruction, the overall education of children in high poverty schools can be improved. Beginning with the 1996–97 school year, Title I participating schools with a poverty level of at least 50 percent can choose to become a schoolwide program.

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Appendix

Descriptions of 20 Successful Local Approaches to Family Involvement

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
Alamo Navajo Community School **Bureau of Indian Affairs** **Magaleno, NM** **(Rural)**	• School addresses distance and language barriers by broadcasting programs in Navajo from a local AM radio station operated by the reservation's school board. • Parents and Teachers as Partners program features a meal that teachers and parents share and workshops on language and math skills development, reading, cooking with children, and other topics. • Parent advisory committee provides an open forum for parents to voice their concerns and recommendations for the school; attendance ranges from 5 to 25 parents. • Monthly parent meetings and open houses are often combined with community events (e.g., basketball games) to attract more parents. • Bilingual home-school liaisons have visited over 75 percent of parents and students at home at least once to personalize school communications; they make an average of 25 visits each month. • All staff members use release time to visit students and parents at home; teachers visit an average of eight homes each month. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, Johnson O'Malley, G&T Dropout Demonstration, Indian Health Services, Title IX Evidence of Success: • Forty to 50 percent of parents participate in at least one activity during the school year, an increase of about 15 percent over the last 5 years. • In 1995–96, parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences jumped from none to over 20 percent. • Principal reports parents spend more time at school events and participating rather than passively attending and listening (e.g., more parents involved in hands-on activities such as the Parents and Teachers as Partners workshops).	K–12 350	100% Navajo	98% FRL (free or reduced-price lunch) Schoolwide Program
Atenville Elementary School **Lincoln County Public Schools** **Harts, WV** **(Rural)**	• Action Research Team of parents and professionals guides, evaluates, and modifies collaborative efforts using relevant research. They receive training two to three times per year and share their training with other parents and teachers on two or three staff development days. • Home-visitor program targets hard-to-reach families, obtains information about families' needs and interests, and collects parent input on school issues. Parent coordinator and Telephone Tree volunteer visit approximately 20 families each year. • Telephone Tree parent representative contacts 20–25 parents every month to discuss school issues and give parents an opportunity to voice their concerns. • Parent workshops take place seven times each year and address topics such as language development among young children, how to help with homework, and children's mathematics learning • Each day, 8–10 parent volunteers, approximately 100 each year, serve on school committees, read with students at lunch breaks, run an after-school tutoring program, attend staff development sessions, make site visits to other schools, and attend Board of Education meetings. • Centrally located family center makes parents feel invited and included. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, Benedum Foundation in Pittsburgh, Institute for Responsive Education in Boston, state grants, Goals 2000, local business partners • Southern West Virginia Community College cosponsors free for-credit courses for parents and pays Atenville instructors to teach them	Pre-K–6 213	100% white	83% FRL Schoolwide Program

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
	Evidence of Success: • From 1991–92 to 1995–96, the number of parent volunteer hours rose from 2,000 to 7,000. • In 1995–96, 100 parents, representing almost half of the families at the school, participated in the annual volunteer training; 8–10 parents volunteer at the school each day. • Number of students participating in after-school tutoring program increased from 21 in the first year to 62 in the third year of the program. • From 1991–92 to 1995–96, CTBS scores for the third grade rose from the 59th to the 71st percentile; sixth grade scores rose from the 58th to 63rd percentile. • In 1996, Atenville parents successfully lobbied the Board of Education to keep the school's K–6 configuration.			
Buffalo Public Schools Parent Center **Buffalo Public Schools** **Buffalo, NY** **(Urban)**	• Personal improvement services include seminars and classes on parenting skills, literacy, education, sewing, art, computer literacy, ESL; more than 100 parents attend. • Average of 45 students and parents each week attend computer classes for families after school; bus brings entire family to center and provides child care if necessary so parents and children can participate together in individualized tutoring and instruction. • Center features two computer labs with 90 computer workstations. • Families who cannot visit center can also borrow one of 140 computers in the center's take-home computer program for 5–6 weeks; parents attend orientation on how to install and operate computers. • After-school tutoring program provides parents and children with individualized homework tutoring. • Child care services available. • Title I parents receive priority enrollment. Funding Sources:[2] Title I, Even Start, partnerships with several local organizations Evidence of Success: • Excluding take-home computer program and field trips, the parent center serves about 250 families each semester. • All center activities serve about 3,000 parents each year. • On a survey of the 1994–95 Take Home Computer Program, 44 percent of parents reported that the program had a "significant" effect on their child's motivation toward learning; 52 percent reported that it had some effect. All parents reported noticeable or significant improvements in their children's math and reading skills.	Birth–12 48,000	53% African American 34% white 10% Hispanic 3% American Indian, Asian	59% FRL
Buhrer Elementary School **Cleveland Public Schools** **Cleveland, OH** **(Urban)**	• Surveyed parents expressed interest in helping children better prepare for state-mandated proficiency exams and in developing a GED program for parents. • Collaboration with Baldwin-Wallace College provides parents with classes in parent-child communication. • Family math offered to families twice a year in English and Spanish; 35 parents attended in 1996. • All homeschool communications are provided in English, Spanish, and Arabic. • School psychologists work regularly with parents on topics that include homework-helping skills and school attendance issues. • Block Parents program provides activities for parents who live far from school; staff go to a nearby library or a parent volunteer's home to address various parent concerns and share school-related information. A typical meeting attracts 18 to 20 parents. Funding Sources:[2] Title I, foundation grant, university partnership	Pre-K–5 450	50% Hispanic 40% African American 5% white	95% FRL Schoolwide Program

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
	Evidence of Success: • Principal reports a continuing increase in the number of Block Parents attending school functions since the program began. • Approximately 300 parents participated in Parent/Family Day and visited classrooms and met teachers. • Two hundred parents attended teacher conferences in 1995–96.			
Cane Run Elementary School **Jefferson County Public Schools** **Louisville, KY** **(Urban)**	• Five Family Technology Nights each year provide hands-on, technology-supported learning activities for parents and their children, increase parents' awareness of available technology, and offer training to parents and community adults in basic computer skills. Approximately 20–40 parents and children attend each night. • School maintains 30 laptop computers for students and parents to borrow overnight or on weekends. • More than 20 families are involved in the Even Start Program; parents study for the GED or take parenting classes while children are in school or the on-site nursery. • Family Resource Center links families with mental health counseling, medical services, social services, and other community resources. • Family Resource Center runs a summer sports program and an affordable after-school tutoring and recreation program for children; approximately four parents volunteer each day. • As many as eight parents accompany teachers on a retreat to participate in meetings on curriculum, planning, student assessment, and other educational issues. Funding Sources:[2] Title I, Kentucky Education Reform Act funds, Goals 2000, local grant, and corporate donations Evidence of Success: • Since 1990, membership in the PTA has grown from 60 to 700. Most of the families at the school now belong to the PTA. The PTA has won more than 30 awards for exemplary attendance, including the state PTA's highest award for a local unit, the Overall Advocate for the Child award. • The number of parents who visit the school building daily has increased from 3–4 parents to 30 parents per day. • During the last 2 years, discipline referrals have declined 30 percent each year. • Attendance has remained steady at about 94 percent over the last few years. • The school has seen modest but steady gains in test scores over the past 4 years.	K–5 450	50% African American 50% white	80% FRL Schoolwide Program
The Family Resource Center at Charter Oak School **West Hartford School District** **West Hartford, CT** **(Urban)**	• School-linked system of family support and services helps involve families in the educational process (e.g., services such as child care and community referrals help families to become involved in their children's education). • School showcased as a School of the 21st Century demonstration site for the Yale/Bush Center at Yale University. • An array of adult education classes is provided including ESL, with the mission of teaching parents the language skills they need to help children with schoolwork and homework. • Principal visits ESL classes to talk with parents. • Teachers visit the home of each entering kindergarten student to include families in children's educational experience from the start. • Parents and teachers run after-school programs, which range from computing to juggling. Funding Sources:[2] $242,000 Kellogg Foundation grant, $40,000 from the state department of education	K–5 300	52% white 23% Hispanic 16% African American 10% Asian	34% FRL (est.)

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
	Evidence of Success: • About 30–35 parents of school-age children visit the family resource center each week. • The school is evaluating the effects of center activities on student achievement; however, data will probably not be available for at least 2 years.			
Rodney B. Cox Elementary School **Pasco County Public Schools** **Dade City, FL** **(Urban)**	• Monthly parent workshops conducted by school staff focus on parenting skills and parents' ability to help with schoolwork and homework. • As a full-service school, Cox offers dental care, counseling, and health care to students and their families. • A parent involvement teacher, two migrant home-school coordinators, and one minority recruiter conduct home visits that include training in parenting skills. • Parents receive transportation to meetings and other school activities. • Local adult education program offers classes twice a week at the school. • School "open door" policy ensures that teachers can meet with parents whenever they come to the school. Funding Sources:[2] Title I, $200,000 PECO grant with matching funds from district, Florida First Start grant, federal Migrant Education funds, state and federal Head Start funding, Exceptional Student Education funding, support/donations from several businesses and organizations Evidence of Success: • During 1995–96, 74 parents registered as volunteers; 10–20 parents volunteer at the school each day. • Up to 200 parents participate in workshops each month. • Parents tell the principal they are now more comfortable at the school. • Test scores have increased over the past 2 years. For example, in 1994–95, 31 percent of students scored above the 50th percentile in math and 14 percent in reading. In 1995–96, 61 percent of the students scored above the 50th percentile in math and 34 percent in reading.	Pre-K–5 512	44% Hispanic 40% African American 16% white	93% FRL Schoolwide Program
DeForest School District **Public Library Team** **DeForest, WI** **(Small town)**	• School district and local public library jointly sponsor a family involvement and literacy program; both commit full-time staff to the effort. • The public library (the local Even Start site) provides early education, parenting education, and adult education on-site; retention rate is 79 percent. • Program produces and distributes self-contained family activity kits each week to all Title I families, all families who participate in the library's story time, and all Even Start families (350 total); parents sign a contract pledging to carry out the activities with their children. • Library circulates copies of district curriculum and objectives; it maintains videotapes of school events such as plays and talent shows for parents to check out if they cannot attend. • Program provides series of Family Learning Nights–9–12 workshops per school year for families of students in grades Pre-K–12. • Program offers workshops for middle and high school students and parents on such topics as career exploration. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, community donations	Pre-K–12 3,000	96% white 4% Middle Eastern, Hispanic	14% FRL

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
	Evidence of Success: • Family learning nights held at the library average about 100 adult participants and many students. Previously, similar events held at the school had very poor or no attendance. • Regular program participation in Even Start and Family Involvement and Literacy programs has increased by at least 25 percent over the last 3 years. • Every child in the district now has a public library card. • Student attendance increased from 95 percent in 1993–94 to 97 percent in 1995–96.			
Ferguson Elementary School **School District of Philadelphia** **Philadelphia, PA** **(Urban)**	• Parents Make A Difference Conference provides a 2-day open house where parents see children reading and participating in hands-on math activities; principal, teachers, and children travel door-to-door on a Sunday to invite the community. • Teacher-directed community workshops are held up to six Saturdays a year to focus on needs of students in different grade levels; 100–150 parents attended the two workshops offered at the end of the 1995–96 school year. • Community Assistants program provides training and stipends to parents to serve as classroom aides. • Parent Network meets to review school and community calendars and to get word out to parents about events. • Approximately six parents a day visit the parenting center, which houses computers and lending library. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, partnership with Temple University Evidence of Success: • The 1995–96 fall open house drew 350 parents, compared with 30 parents in 1989. • Fifty parents volunteer as classroom aides each week. • From 1993 to 1996, the percentage of first graders reading on grade level increased from 5 to 37 percent. • From 1993 to 1996, the number of disciplinary referrals dropped from 586 to 267. • Average daily attendance increased from 80 percent to 90 percent during the same period. • Twenty-five parents received certificates of continuing education from Temple University in 1995–96.	Pre-K–5 750	75% African American 25% Hispanic	98% AFDC Schoolwide Program
Family School Partners in Education **Greensville County Public Schools** **Emporia, VA** **(Rural)**	• Mobile Parent Resource Center targets parents of Title I students and travels to four sites each day, serving 12–18 parents at a time; parents are trained as tutors to work with their children. • Six area businesses allow the Mobile Parent Resource Center to visit work sites so that employee parents can participate before or after school or during break. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I Evidence of Success: • Parent visits to the center doubled from 1991 to 1992; approximately 420 parents have visited each year since 1992. • An average of 75 parents have been trained each year since June 1992. • Although the test scores of children whose parents visit the center are not specifically tracked, Title I students countywide have shown growth on the ITBS pre- and post-tests in reading since 1991–92 (e.g., third-grade scores increased 8 percentage points in 1991–92 from the pre-test to post-test and fifth-grade scores increased 12 percentage points in 1993–94).	K–12 2,764	67% African American 33% white	56% FRL

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
Hueco Elementary School **Socorro Independent School District** **El Paso, TX** **(Rural)**	• Parent workshops and courses address general parenting skills, including effective nurturing, child development, drug abuse prevention, and health and physical well being. The number of parents who attend ranges from eight to 30. • Classes in citizenship, ESL, GED, and computer skills support parents' own educational and personal goals. Two years ago, 20 parents became U.S. citizens through the citizenship course. • All Hueco families participate in the Super Readers program, which provides incentives for parents to read with their children. • Family Math nights introduce parents to school curriculum. Participation increased from 30 parents at the first session in 1995–96 to 80 in 1996–97. • All home-school communications and parent workshops and activities are conducted in both English and Spanish. • Twenty to 30 parents attend the monthly Parent Communication Council, which allows them to share their concerns about the school with the principal and vice principal. • Teachers receive release time to conduct home visits. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, Bilingual Education, private donations, state aid, PTO fundraising Evidence of Success: • The number of parents involved in at least one activity increased from 30 percent in the 1994–95 school year to 80 percent in 1996–97. • Parent participation in the school has grown beyond fundraising and clerical work to include participating in school decisionmaking and classroom instruction, furthering their own educational goals, and contributing to students' learning at home. • Student attendance averages 97 percent. • In two recent years, each grade level scored at or above the 70th percentile in all areas of the Texas Assessment of Academic skills.	Pre-K–5 600	98% Hispanic	95% FRL Schoolwide Program
Clinton Kelly Elementary School **Portland Public Schools** **Portland, OR** **(Small city)**	• In the Family Stories Project, parents and children write and illustrate family histories, which are worked into curriculum; child care is provided for preschool-aged children of participants. • Parents and teachers meet to discuss topics of interest one morning per month. • Parents took an active role in the decision to implement Boyer's Basic School program. • Parents participate in Dorothy Rich's Mega-Skills Project; parents teach other parents how to improve their children's learning skills. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I Evidence of Success: • Participation in the Family Stories Project rose from ten in 1994, its first year, to approximately 35 currently. • Participation in monthly discussions rose from five in 1993–94 to 25 currently. • Twenty participated in first year of Mega-Skills project.	K–5 530	74% white 16% Russian 6% Hispanic 4% Asian	68% FRL Schoolwide Program
Maine School Administration District #3 **Thorndike, ME** **(Rural)**	• Telephone hub site at the district high schools links all schools electronically; parents have access to computers through local schools and town offices. • Junior High Potluck Nights include dinner and child care if needed so that seventh- and eighth-grade students and parents can meet with teachers to discuss students' needs and ways that parents can help with their education. • Parents attend off-site retreats with school staff to learn about curriculum and develop strategies for increasing parent involvement; attendance has increased significantly in the past several years.	K–12 1,750	99% white	50% FRL

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
	• Family Math and Science Nights introduce parents to school curriculum. • Volunteer coordinators at each school help train and engage parents in school activities. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, $500,000 from the Kellogg Foundation's Rural Leadership Initiative, Noyce Grant for professional development, federal Reflective Practice Grants, Beacon grants funded by the National Science Foundation Evidence of Success: • Three potluck nights held in 1995–96, each reaching increasing numbers of families—roughly 60, 75, and 95 families. • Family math and science nights reach about 200 families districtwide each year. • Volunteers performed 3,500 hours of work in 1995–96 school year.			
Parent Resource Center **Stockton Unified School District** **Stockton, CA** **(Small city)**	District Parent Resource Center provides: – Resource materials for parents to use at the center or at home, including curriculum materials to use with children, videotapes/cassettes, instructional aids, and books covering a wide range of subjects – Information and materials about state and federal programs – Parenting classes, educational aides workshops, hands-on workshops in math and language arts, and workshops for parents of high-risk students; attendance ranges from 15 parents to 150 depending on subject. – Transportation and child care services for parents attending the center – Training for individual schools upon request • Mentor parents train both parents and school staff at the school and district level. Approximately 300 parents have become mentors since March 1993, and in 1995–96 they spent 400 hours making presentations. • Parents are planning next year's ongoing training for other parents. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, state funds for school improvement Evidence of Success: • Mentor Parent program trained 61 parents and resulted in more than 5,000 volunteer hours spent in schools during 1996–97 (including nearly 2,000 hours in middle and secondary schools). • Parents volunteering at one middle school contributed 4,000 volunteer hours; the number of conduct code violations at the school dropped from 647 in 1994–95 to 349 in 1995–96, despite a 15 percent increase in the student population. • Several parent participants have become members, board members, and officers of two organizations that advocate parental involvement: The California Association of Compensatory Education and the National Coalition of Title I/Chapter 1 Parents. • Each year the district honors 70–75 outstanding volunteers who together provide 25,000 plus hours of service to students and schools.	K–12 34,020	40% Hispanic 29% Asian American 17% white 13% African American 2% Native American	50% AFDL In 1996–97 all elementary schools will implement schoolwide programs
Wendell Phillips VPA Magnet School **Kansas City Public Schools** **Kansas City, MO** **(Urban)**	• Parent/community liaison averages 10 home visits per week to get parents' input on important issues and to discuss children's academic or social problems. • Parent/community liaison arranges carpools, drives parents herself, or arranges for parents to take taxis to school. • Parent resource area lends learning kits, educational videos, how-to materials, books, and tapes to support student learning at home. Approximately 10 to 15 parents visit each day. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, state desegregation funding, community volunteers, donations from local business partners	K–5 400	70% African American 22% white 8% Hispanic and other minority	79% FRL Schoolwide Program Magnet School

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
	Evidence of Success: • During the 1995–96 school year, approximately 150 parents attended parent/teacher conferences. • An orientation session on state, district, and school policies at the beginning of the 1996–97 school year was attended by 157 parents. • There were no increases in some tested subject areas on the ITBS from 1994–95 to 1995–96; however, first grade made some modest increases (e.g., vocabulary by three percentile points and math concepts by four percentile points); also third and fifth grades saw increases in math.			
The Alliance Schools Initiative **Roosevelt High School** **Dallas Independent School District** **Dallas, TX** **(Statewide initiative implemented in urban school)**	• Alliance Schools Initiative develops a strong community-based constituency of parents, teachers, and community leaders who work to increase student achievement in low-income communities throughout Texas. • Teachers and principals agree to design and implement innovative school reform strategies in collaboration with parents, with each other, and with a network of organizations. • Schools provide training for the surrounding community by involving parents in both improving educational achievement as well as developing a community that values education. • Initiative includes 70 K–12 schools statewide. Roosevelt High School: • In a neighborhood Walk for Success, teams of faculty, parents, and other community members walk door to door to talk with parents about their needs and interests and how to improve the school. • Parents of sophomores attend classes to learn about state tests and to take sample tests. • Parent liaison averages 30–60 telephone calls to parents each day. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, district grants, Investment Capital Fund grants from the Texas Education Agency (which are competitive grants received by many Alliance schools) Evidence of Success: • Approximately ten parents attended the first Roosevelt PTA meeting in 1993, compared with 200 at the first meeting in 1996. • From 1992–93 to 1995–96, Roosevelt student performance on the state test rose from the 40th to the 81st percentile in reading, from the 16th to the 70th percentile in mathematics, and from the 58th to the 80th percentile in writing. • From 1992–93 to 1994–95, attendance at Roosevelt rose over 11 percent.	9–12 1,067	Roosevelt: 95% African American 5% Hispanic	80% FRL Schoolwide Program
South Bay Union Elementary School District **Imperial Beach, CA** **(Urban)**	• Superintendent, principals, and teachers are evaluated on the extent to which they promote and increase parent participation. • Staff must participate in training on how to interact with and be responsive to parents. • District provides year-round parenting classes in multiple languages. • Parent volunteer coordinator makes home visits to parents and refers parents to social service agencies. • School-based parent centers offer services and information. • Schools guarantee that students will read on grade level by the end of the third grade if parents adhere to the requirements of a school-family compact. • Parenting skills classes address behavior and discipline issues. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I	K–6 10,000	62% Hispanic 18% White 9% Filipino 11% African American and other minority	76% FRL

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
	Evidence of Success: • Volunteer program hours increased from 103,423 in 1994–95 to 130,301 in 1995–96. • More than 400 students and 250 parents attend the district's annual Read to Me Conference.			
South Delta Elementary School **South Delta School District** **Rolling Fork, MS** **(Rural)**	• Student folder sent home weekly for parent review contains child's corrected work and results of any tests, with space for the teacher to write additional notes to parents. • Parent seminars/workshops address such topics as children's self-esteem, homework, grade—specific learner objectives. • Back-to-School Night inaugurates the home-school partnership, with strategies to maximize parent attendance and inform parents about what their children should learn (e.g., students and parents demonstrate hands-on learning activities specific to each grade level). • End-of-School Night provides parents with a chance to review the school year with staff and to recommend changes for the upcoming year; attendance maximized by having parents pick up student report cards at meeting. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I Evidence of Success: • Attendance at seminars and PTA meetings now averages 50, versus 10 in the past. • Partnership with Welfare Department has increased number of regular volunteers at the parent resource center. • Reading, language arts, and math ITBS scores increased from 1993–94 to 1994–95 for first through fifth grades (e.g., in math, increases ranged from 5 percent for third graders to 12 percent for first graders; in language arts, increases ranged from 5 percent for second graders to 12 percent for first graders). • School recently taken off probation for not meeting requirements for state mean ITBS scores.	Pre-K–5 691	85% African American 15% white	90% FRL Schoolwide Program
Turnbull Learning Academy **San Mateo-Foster City School District** **San Mateo, CA** **(Urban)**	• Magnet program features a school-family compact that requires families to devote 100 hours a year to their children's education. • Parents track their participation through a point system in which they earn an agreed upon number of points each month for helping with homework, attending school events, and completing weekly literacy activities with their children. • Parents get weekly envelope of activities to complete with their children. • About 60 parents attend parent education workshops each month that address parenting skills; about 20 parents are in attendance at each 6-week session offered twice a year in ESL skills. Funding Sources:[2] • Title I Evidence of Success: • In 1994–95 and 1995–96, all families at the school completed their family partnership agreements. • Almost 100 Turnbull parents are active members of the PTA. • From 1993–94 to 1994–95, absenteeism fell from 15 percent to less than 1 percent. • Turnbull received the California Department of Education Distinguished School Award in 1995.	Pre-K–5 688	90+% Hispanic	94% FRL Schoolwide Program Magnet School

Program/School, LEA, City, State	Program Description		Student Characteristics	
	Parent Involvement Activities/Strategies	Grades Served; Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	% Poverty[1] and Title I Status
	• Turnbull was selected as a leadership school during the 1996–97 school year by the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative. • Third and fourth graders made gains in test scores in reading, mathematics, and language in 1995–96 (e.g., in language, third grade scores increased 12 percentile points and fourth grade 20 percentile points; in math, third grade scores rose 8 percentile points and fourth grade 1 percentile point). Second graders made a 3 percentile point gain in reading and a 14 percentile point gain in math.			
Western Middle School **Jefferson County Public Schools** **Louisville, KY** **(Urban)**	• School provides 2 full-day parent-teacher conferences per year; each teaching team sends home letters, calls parents, and makes home visits to encourage parents to attend; additionally, walk-ins are accommodated and welcomed. • The Youth Service Center is staffed by a parent support coordinator and a home/school coordinator; center staff run all after-school programs and activities and refer students and parents to various community resources; approximately 90 percent of Western students visit the center each school year. • In the current school year, the Right Question Project provides school staff with training on how to structure their parent involvement activities and how to train parents to be better advocates for their children. In Fall 1996, an average of two to three parents attended meetings, but the school expects an increase in attendance. • In 1996–97, the school council will include four voting parents and other community members to encourage participatory management (required by KERA). Funding Sources:[2] • Title I, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation grant, Kentucky Education Reform Act funding Evidence of Success: • From fall 1995 to spring 1996, number of parent conferences conducted jumped from 90 to 280.	6–8 750	69% white 30% African American 1% Pacific Islanders	86% FRL

[1] All schools and districts included in this Idea Book receive Title I funding. This column indicates whether a school has implemented a schoolwide program.

[2] Administrators in many schools cannot separate the costs of parent involvement efforts from other reforms and activities. This is especially true in schools that have implemented schoolwide programs (as have most schools in this appendix). However, administrators reported that, in addition to their school or district general operating budget, the funding sources listed here provide a major source of support for their parent involvement efforts.

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education: Overview and Sign-on Information

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

What We Do

The Partnership's mission and activities

- Increase opportunities for families to be more involved in their children's learning at school and at home.
- Improve student performance levels and close the achievement gap.

Who We Are We are thousands of partners joined together in a growing grassroots movement to support student learning according to high standards. We come from families, schools, and a variety of businesses, communities and religions, and are organized into four groups: Family-School Partners, Employers for Learning, Community Organizations, and Religious Groups.

The Benefits of Joining

- Connect with other groups to share ideas about educating our nation's children;
- Work together to increase and improve efforts to help children learn;
- Get the latest information about family involvement in education and related activities; and
- Receive recognition for visible commitments to education at the local, state and national levels.

Local Activities of Partners

At the local level, partners support efforts to:

- Strengthen family-school partnerships through good communication, accountability and mutual responsibility for children's learning;
- Adopt family- and student-friendly business practices;
- Provide before- and after-school learning activities that can also keep children safe and drug-free;
- Make effective use of facilities–schools, community buildings, churches–for children and families; and
- Give parents the resources, training and information they need to help children learn, and teachers and principals the tools they need to engage families.

Nationwide Activities of the Partnership

In addition to the numerous local activities in which Partnership members are involved, many participate in nationwide activities such as the following:

Helping children read beginning with the early years. Through mentoring and tutoring programs, partners strengthen children's reading skills beginning with the preschool years. Participating children read and write with partners who share a love of reading with them.

Supporting drug and violence prevention and after-school education. Partners promote safety and drug prevention during and after school through mentoring and tutoring programs that strengthen academic success.

Providing access to educational technology. Partners support learning enrichment activities through programs that provide teachers, parents and children with access to educational technology.

Strengthening the school-home connection. Partner organizations work with postsecondary institutions and local schools to develop teacher preparation and professional development opportunities in family involvement. School accountability is emphasized and families are prepared to collaborate with school administrators and teachers.

To join and for more information call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at <http://pfie.ed.gov>

PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Partner Registration

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

This form is also available at http://pfie.ed.gov where you can complete and submit it on line. If you do not have Internet access, mail the form to Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173, or fax to 202-205-9133.

(Note: The information you provide is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and would be made available upon request.)

Name of organization: _____

Address (line 1): _____

Address (line 2): _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Telephone: _____ **Fax:** _____

URL of organization's education page: http://www. _____

Head of organization: _____

Contact name: _____ **Contact e-mail:** _____

Is your organization a(n)? (Check one)

- ☐ Family-School Partner
- ☐ Community Organization
- ☐ Employer for Learning
- ☐ Religious Group

Does your organization do any of these activities? (Check all that apply)

Do you . . .

- ☐ Sponsor after-school, weekend or summer programs for children
- ☐ Sponsor mentoring or tutoring programs
- ☐ Co-sponsor community outreach activities with schools
- ☐ Combat alcohol, drugs, and violence in schools and neighborhoods
- ☐ Provide literacy training
- ☐ Provide parenting skills training
- ☐ Other (Describe briefly)

_____

Check three major reasons your organization is joining the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education.

- ☐ Show commitment to education
- ☐ Network with other partners
- ☐ Learn new and better ways to promote learning
- ☐ Learn about federal programs and grant money
- ☐ Receive publications and support services
- ☐ Gain recognition for your organization
- ☐ Receive information, ideas and support from other local PFIE members
- ☐ Other (Describe briefly)

_____

In which family involvement in education information and activities are you most interested? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Information on good practices or programs that work
- ☐ Regional or national conferences of PFIE partners and opportunities to network
- ☐ A "Start Up Guide" for coordinating with local partners
- ☐ Tools for self-evaluation of partnership success
- ☐ Other (Describe briefly)

_____

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